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INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 000308

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [POL](#) [PGOV](#) [EFIN](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: MUTHANNA'S TOP CRIME FIGHTER MAY BE REPLACED

REF: BAGHDAD 192

Classified By: PRT Team Leader Brad Lynch for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (U) This is a Muthanna PRT reporting cable.

12. (C) Summary: Criminal Investigative Unit (CIU) Chief, Brigadier General Ali, generally regarded as Muthanna's top crime fighter, was recently scheduled for reassignment by the Ministry of Interior (MoI). Provincial Council (PC) contacts stated that allies of Prime Minister Maliki orchestrated the transfer order. Muthanna's governor has intervened, keeping Ali in his position for the time being. The PRT believes that this move was politically motivated. BGen Ali is supported by ISCI, and Da'wa-friendly people within MoI have named a vocal ISCI critic as his putative successor. The actions in Muthanna follow a pattern in which the PM and his allies have recently removed several high-ranking provincial police officials, replacing them with political allies. End summary.

13. (SBU) BGen Ali, Commander of Muthanna CIU, is considered by most to be one of the primary reasons there has been so little violence in this province. He has been a strong force in the fight against the Jaysh al-Mahdi and has pressed others in MoI, include officials in neighboring provinces such as Najaf, to be more aggressive in their pursuit of militia activists. While it is likely that he has stepped on a few toes over the past couple of years, there is no evidence to suggest that Ali's job performance or professional reputation would necessitate his replacement. The PRT was therefore surprised to learn that he would soon be forced to make a lateral move to a position outside Muthanna.

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MoI Removes Ali, Governor Intervenes  
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14. (SBU) During a recent engagement with MajGen Qadaam, Muthanna's Police Chief, PRT Team Leader was informed that BGen Ali and his CIU organization had been placed transferred to Iraqi Police control -- i.e. Qadaam's control, which reports to the MoI. This apparently happened while Ali was out of the country making a Haj pilgrimage trip to Mecca. In a later engagement the same day with Ali's deputy, we heard a slightly different version of the story. One week later Mohammad Zayadi, a PC member, told us that a senior MoI Deputy, reportedly Deputy Director for Intelligence Adnan al-Zurfi, had removed BGen Ali from his CIU position and transferred him to another post within MoI. Adnan is considered a close ally of the PM within MoI.

15. (SBU) Governor Marzook, who is normally very reserved during his engagements with the PRT, emphatically stated that he had intervened in this matter, placing a hold on Ali's reassignment.

16. (Note: The new Provincial Powers Law (PPL), which takes effect when the new PC is seated, grants provincial governments the right to reassign "senior officials" --

including the Chief of Police and Directors General of ministries. The PPL would not grant the new provincial government the right to challenge reassignments by ministries below that level, including the level of CIU Chief. Therefore the Governor has to depend on his influence in this matter rather than legal authority. End note.)

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Da'wa vs. ISCI  
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¶7. (C) MoI has reportedly named BGen Kareem Ehlaibit al-Zayadi to replace Ali. Kareem was Muthanna's Police Chief from 2003 to 2005, during which time he was a vocal critic of the former Governor and his political party, ISCI. Ali, on the other hand, is supported by ISCI. This appointment follows a recent pattern in which the Prime Minister and his Qfollows a recent pattern in which the Prime Minister and his allies have removed other top security officials at the provincial level and replaced them with those more favorably inclined to the PM politically (reftel).

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Comment  
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¶8. (SBU) Early reporting indicates that Governor Marzook's al-Jumhoor list fared reasonably well in the provincial election, placing third in a tightly contested, highly dispersed vote. Marzook does not have a college degree and will not be eligible to serve another term as chief executive. BGen Ali's fate will therefore likely be decided by whatever influence Muthanna's next governor can exert on

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the MoI and the Prime Minister. The PRT has had a strong relationship with BGen Ali and believes that his departure would be a setback for the province. End Comment.  
CROCKER